



## PARAGUAY GENERAL INFORMATION



*The bizarre **Red-legged Seriema** can be seen in Paraguay (photo Oscar Rodriguez).*

## PLEASE SEE TOUR PAGES FOR SPECIFIC INFORMATION ABOUT INDIVIDUAL PARAGUAY TOURS

The small, landlocked country of Paraguay cannot compete with countries like Colombia, Peru and Ecuador with huge bird lists, however it does harbor a number of stellar species which are otherwise difficult to see elsewhere in South America. Although Paraguay is one of the least visited countries in South America, it has a great deal to offer for intrepid birders who will enjoy exploring the remote wilderness of the Chaco and the Atlantic Forest. Some of the standout species of Paraguay include a number of the rarest birds in South America such as **Robust Woodpecker**, **Helmeted Woodpecker**, **White-winged Nightjar**, **Vinaceous-breasted Amazon**, and **Saffron-cowled Blackbird**. The country also hosts all Chaco endemics and an amazing assortment of rare and elusive mammals, such as **Geoffroy's Cat**.

### MEDICAL AND TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE

We strongly encourage you to purchase trip cancellation or interruption insurance in case you have to cancel due to illness or for any other reason, as tour payments are non-refundable as per our terms and conditions. **We particularly advise you to get a plan that ensures it will cover all your medical care and evacuation back to your country of residence.**

### MEALS

We will have three meals per day and snacks in between. We normally have breakfast and dinner in the hotels and lodges and a picnic style lunch in the field or in a restaurant along the road. Please note that in Paraguay we might sometimes have breakfasts out in the field and occasionally some later-than-usual dinners.

Paraguayans grill-roast beef for most meals (even for breakfast) but will often include other meats such as sausages and lamb. Chicken and fish are possible, but less likely. If you are vegetarian or vegan, please let us know well in advance so that we can make all possible arrangements to provide you with meat-free options which are generally limited and could get quite repetitive on tour. If you are vegetarian, we kindly ask you to respect the choices of tour participants and locals alike, with their decision to eat meat, as meat is very popular and traditional in Paraguay. If the group is keen, we will try some of the local-style grilled meat too.



*Barbecuing Paraguayan style!*

## **WATER**

We will provide unlimited water in the vehicle while we are in the field. However, the more expensive bottled water such as in restaurants and in your rooms, will be for your own account. Drinks, including soft drinks, fruit juices, and alcoholic beverages, are not included in the tour price.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

We encourage you to read more about the accommodation on the tour [here](#). In summary, the accommodation on this tour will vary from good quality hotels in the larger towns and cities to fairly basic accommodation in the more remote areas, such as at some of the ranches and family-run *haciendas*. We have included a few photos below which give examples of the accommodation standards we are likely to use on the tour.





*Hotel Puerto Seguro*



*Accommodation at Iparoma Ranch.*



*Mbaracayú Lodge*

## **MONEY**

Paraguay's official currency is the Guaraní. You can exchange US dollars or Euros for Guaranies at the *bureau de change* in the Asunción Airport. Asunción Airport will be one of the few places to exchange money and we strongly recommend you obtain all the local currency you'll need for the whole tour, here. Please note that US dollars are not widely accepted in the country and credit cards are not accepted in remote areas, where we will be spending the majority of our time on this tour.

## **INTERNET**

We strongly recommend you buy a SIM card at Asunción Airport in case you need internet during the trip. Most places do not offer Wi-Fi, although some of the hotels in the larger towns and cities do have Wi-Fi.

## **HEALTH**

There are no vaccination requirements to enter Paraguay, although some are recommended. Please kindly refer to the [CDC's Traveler information for Paraguay](#) for detailed information. Paraguay is free of Malaria and Dengue Fever is generally absent from most of the country, although some areas do experience outbreaks during the rainy season.

Hepatitis A and B are listed on most websites, although both are seemingly rare in Paraguay. We advise you to get a Tetanus and Rabies shot. We strongly recommend you take note of the advice given by the [CDC](#), a travel clinic, or your family doctor.

Please let us know about any medical conditions you may have, such as diabetes, asthma, allergies, heart conditions, or knee problems, also including phobias or anything you think

we should know about, to take care of you so that you can have an enjoyable and stress-free trip.

Diarrhea is always a tricky hazard to manage while traveling around South America. Even though many travelers escape untouched, we ask you to consult your doctor and bring some medicine to treat diarrhea, such as Imodium or Ciprofloxacin (500 mg). Please note that sometimes the dramatic change from your normal diet might result in some mild stomach or digestive abnormalities that will likely disappear after a short time. Only when this problem is followed by nausea and/or fever, may there be a real diarrhea problem. We recommend drinking only bottled water and follow your tour leader's advice with regards to drinking water.

## **INSECTS & OTHER PESTS**

Insects will be present during the tour and, depending on the region, insect numbers can be high at times. We recommend that you wear loose-fitting long pants and long-sleeved shirts and keep insect repellent handy. Additionally, spraying your feet, socks, shoes, and the lower portion of your pants with insect repellent will help reduce chigger bites. Chiggers are burrowing mites that are found throughout the Americas in hot areas. They occur on grass, and even though they do not spread any kind of disease, their bites produce long-term itching as an allergic reaction. Mosquitoes, sand flies, and ticks are not uncommon in the Chaco. Be aware of wasps, ants and bees when walking along forest trails. If you are allergic to insect bites, please bring your medication and prescription, in case you need to buy further supplies in Paraguay.

## **SECURITY**

The Paraguayan countryside, in all areas that we visit, is considered safe, and you will find that Paraguayans are generally friendly and helpful. We should be more vigilant in big cities though, as Paraguayan cities, such as Asunción and Ciudad Del Este, suffer the same problems as large cities worldwide, and you should take precautions to safeguard personal belongings such as money, passports, and optical equipment. We recommend using money belts or security pouches worn inside your clothing. You should avoid walking at night in large cities without informing your tour leader, and do not walk around big cities displaying binoculars and big cameras. Certain areas of Asunción are considered relatively dangerous, even in the daylight hours.

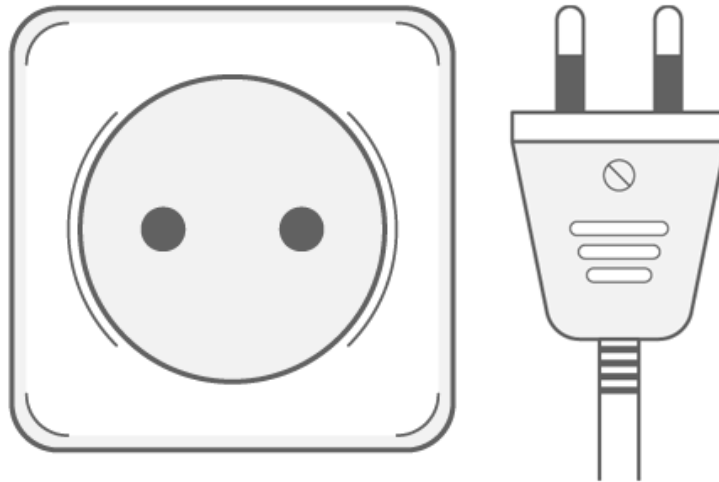
During our drives across the remote areas in the Chaco we might be asked to stop at one or two highway control police checkpoints. It is common that police will ask us for identification and passports and might even take a brief look in our vehicle, as part of a routine traffic inspection.

## **SAFETY**

While in the field remember that, although rarely encountered, there are venomous snakes around (such as the South American Rattle Snake) as well as ants, wasps, etc., which are more commonly encountered. We suggest you do not walk in sandals into the dry woodlands, tall grass or forest, and take a flashlight along at night if you cannot easily see where you are stepping. We strongly recommend you do not walk away from the group or walk off forest trails while in these remote areas.

## ELECTRICITY

Electrical plug-in sockets in Paraguay are usually (ITA Type C), and the current is usually 220 volts. A surge protector is strongly recommended, as is a universal adaptor, to ensure all your electrical devices can be easily charged.



*Plug and socket used in Paraguay.*

## PASSPORT AND VISA

We recommend you ensure that your passport is valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Paraguay. It is also a good idea to ensure your passport has a few blank pages as some countries require a full page for the stamp in your passport. Please bring a few Xerox copies/photocopies of your passport as well as the details of your consular representation in Paraguay. **We ask you to check with the Paraguay consular representation in your country in advance to see if you need a visa to enter Paraguay. Several passport holders do not need visas for entry into Paraguay, however you might still need to pay a reciprocity fee or for a visa-on-arrival.**

## CLOTHING

Long pants and long-sleeved shirts are best to deter any insects and safeguard from minor scratches from vegetation. New, lightweight outdoor varieties are very comfortable and dry quickly. A fleece or light-weight jacket is recommended for early mornings, which may sometimes have cold winds. Shorts and T-shirts will be useful when in some of the warmer areas of the Chaco, especially around our lodges.

Light-weight hiking boots will be invaluable, preferably waterproof Gore-Tex boots. Rubber boots are always an option but typically do not provide sufficient support while hiking. Sandals are useful around lodges but should not be worn out in the field.

As for wet weather gear, an umbrella or poncho (just in case) whichever you feel is more practical, will both work well.

## TOUR VEHICLES & SEAT ROTATION

For our Paraguay tours, we usually use 4x4 Nissan Patrol vehicles. For groups of three or fewer, we will be in one vehicle, while for groups of four to six, we will be in two vehicles (and rarely three vehicles for groups of seven to eight). This will ensure everybody will have window seats to enjoy the impressive Paraguayan landscape.

At Birding Ecotours, we employ a seat rotation policy on all our small-group, set-departure tours. This will ensure everybody has equal opportunities throughout the tour. Unfortunately motion sickness will not excuse you from our seat rotation policy and thus if you are prone to motion sickness you should ensure you bring the necessary medication. We also require that you are fit and flexible enough to maneuver yourself to the back of the vehicle. Tour participants should also be mindful of what extra equipment they bring into the general seating area of the vehicle (rather than the luggage section) and should ensure they do not clog up general thoroughfare or extra seats with camera equipment, tripods, etc. from a comfort and health and safety point of view.

## WHAT TO BRING

**Please kindly read the general list of what to bring on a birding tour, [here](#).**

The tour leader will usually have a spotting scope for general use for all participants. However, we ask you to initially only have brief views of the birds to ensure everybody gets a view, especially of elusive species. Once the entire group has had scope views of the bird, we can enjoy further prolonged views. If you like to enjoy longer scope views, you might consider bringing your own scope.

Please avoid nylon or plastic jackets and/or rainwear of similar materials. Noisy clothing is annoying to others and may frighten birds, especially when out owling.

